

Message Text

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ACTION SP-02

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AF-10 ARA-10 EA-10 EUR-12 NEA-10

AGRE-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 FRB-03

INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-06 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03

LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 NSC-05 SS-15 STR-04 CEA-01

FEA-01 ERDA-05 DODE-00 FPC-01 H-01 INT-05 L-03

PM-05 OES-07 ACDA-07 /155 W

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P R 250925Z AUG 77

FM AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4772

INFO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MEXICO

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY TEHERAN

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 OUAGADOUGOU 3189

USOECD

FOR S/P LAKE FROM THE AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EGEN, ECIN

SUBJ: NORTH-SOUTH STRATEGIES

REF: (A) STATE 191928; (B) TEHRAN 7426

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1. SINCE OUAGADOUGOU IS THE ONLY ADDRESSEE POST IN THE SAHEL AND INDEED IN FRANCOPHONE AFRICA, WHERE MANY OF THE WORLD'S POOREST COUNTRIES ARE LOCATED, I ASSUME THAT I SHOULD CONSIDER THIS AS MY "AREA" AND CONCENTRATE ON THE PROBLEMS OF RELATIONS BETWEEN THE INDUSTRIAL NORTH AND THE POOREST NATIONS OF AFRICA (BILL SULLIVAN'S SECTOR (B) THE POOREST OF THE POOR).

2. WITH REGARD TO PARA 3 OF REFTEL, THE POOR COUNTRIES OF AFRICA ARE ALREADY INVOLVED IN MULTILATERAL AND GLOBAL INSTITUTIONS BUT WHETHER THIS INVOLVEMENT IS CONSTRUCTIVE IS OPEN TO QUESTION. UPPER VOLTA, FOR EXAMPLE, IS INVOLVED IN A LARGE NUMBER OF SUBREGIONAL AND REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS BESIDES BEING A MEMBER OF THE U.N., ITS SPECIALIZED AGENCIES, AS WELL AS THE WORLD BANK AND THE IMF, BUT IT HAS VERY FEW QUALIFIED PEOPLE WHO CAN USEFULLY PARTICIPATE IN THE HUNDREDS OF MEETINGS WHICH THIS INVOLVEMENT DETAILS. THE RESULT IS THAT MINISTERS AND OTHER HIGH RANKING OFFICIALS WHO HAVE VERY HEAVY RESPONSIBILITIES AT HOME ARE OUT OF THE COUNTRY A GREAT DEAL OF THE TIME. THUS THEY NEGLECT THEIR DUTIES AT HOME AND YET THEY CANNOT DEVOTE ENOUGH TIME TO GETTING PROPERLY BRIEFED IN ORDER TO PLAY A CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE AT THESE MEETINGS. FURTHERMORE, MEMBERSHIP IN ALL THESE ORGANIZATIONS, PARTICULARLY SUB REGIONAL AFRICAN ORGANIZATIONS, REQUIRES UPPER VOLTA TO PROVIDE SOME OFFICIALS FOR THE SECRETARIAT. EVERY TIME A HIGHLY TRAINED VOLTA OFFICIAL IS APPOINTED TO THE SECRETARIAT OF AN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION, HE LEAVES A GAP AT HOME WHICH IS VERY DIFFICULT TO FILL. FOR EXAMPLE, MAMDOU SIMPORE, DIRECTOR OF POST AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS IN UPPER VOLTA, WAS RECENTLY APPOINTED SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE AFRICAN TELECOMMUNICATIONS UNION BASED IN BRAZZAVILLE. HE IS ONE OF VERY FEW QUALIFIED EXPERTS

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IN TELECOMMUNICATIONS. IT WILL BE MONTHS BEFORE HIS SUCCESSOR IS IN A POSITION TO FILL HIS SHOES. FINALLY, THERE IS THE QUESTION OF CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE ASSESSED BUDGETS OF ALL THESE ORGANIZATIONS. ALTHOUGH THE POOR COUNTRIES OF AFRICA PAY A MINUSCULE PART OF THE ASSESSED BUDGETS, THE AGGREGATE IS FAR FROM INSIGNIFICANT. UPPER VOLTA'S ANNUAL CONTRIBUTION TO ALL THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, FOR EXAMPLE, COMES CLOSE TO 2.5 PCT OF ITS TOTAL BUDGET. IN SPITE OF ALL THESE PROBLEMS, THE POOR COUNTRIES OF AFRICA ARE NOT ABOUT TO GIVE UP MEMBERSHIP IN THE VARIOUS MULTILATERAL AND GLOBAL INSTITUTIONS. WHILE THEY WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY WISH TO PLAY A MORE CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE, THEY ARE NOT IN A POSITION TO DO SO, AND I BELIEVE WE SHOULD MOVE WITH CAUTION IN TRYING TO INVOLVE THEM FURTHER IN THE WORK OF THESE ORGANIZATIONS.

3. WITH REGARD TO THE SECOND QUESTION, I BELIEVE THAT IF THE FOCUS OF OUR BILATERAL AID PROGRAMS BECAME THE ATTEMPT TO MEET THE BASIC FOOD, HEALTH AND EDUCATION NEEDS OF THE POOR COUNTRIES IN AFRICA, THEIR GOVERNMENTS AND PUBLIC FIGURES WOULD REACT MOST FAVORABLY. THIS IN FACT IS ALREADY BEING ATTEMPTED BY AID IN THE SAHEL IN

COLLABORATION WITH OTHER DONORS WITHIN THE "CLUB DU SAHEL"
AND THE RESPONSE FROM THE SAHELIAN COUNTRIES HAS BEEN
VERY POSITIVE. HOWEVER, WE MUST NOT LOSE SIGHT OF THE
FACT THAT IN ATTEMPTING TO MEET THE BASIC FOOD,
HEALTH AND EDUCATION NEEDS OF THE POOR, WE CANNOT
ESCAPE GETTING INVOLVED IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF ROADS,
BRIDGES, SMALL DAMS, ETC. ONE OF THE BIG PROBLEMS
WE FACED DURING THE SAHEL DROUGHT WAS THE DIFFICULTY
OF GETTING FOOD TO THE STARVING PEOPLE. BECAUSE OF
THE POOR CONDITIONS OF RURAL ROADS, MANY COMMUNITIES
ARE COMPLETELY ISOLATED SEVERAL MONTHS OUT OF THE
YEAR. THERE MAY BE FAMINE IN ONE PART OF THE COUNTRY
AND A SURPLUS OF CEREALS IN ANOTHER BUT, UNDER PRESENT
CONDITIONS, GETTING THE SURPLUS TO THE NEEDY IS A MOST
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 OUAGADOUGOU 3189

USOECN

DIFFICULT TASK. ANOTHER ASPECT THAT WE SHOULD NOT OVERLOOK IS THAT OF ENERGY. THE POOR COUNTRIES OF THE SAHEL ARE SPENDING SMALL FORTUNES FOR THEIR OIL IMPORTS. I AM OF THE OPINION THAT WE SHOULD MAKE A MAJOR EFFORT TO HELP THEM HARNESS THE ONE SOURCE OF ENERGY THEY DO HAVE: THE SUN. I HAVE BEEN AGITATING FOR THREE YEARS TO GET SOME SOLAR ENERGY PROJECTS STARTED IN UPPER VOLTA BUT SO FAR WITH LITTLE SUCCESS. YET, I UNDERSTAND THAT THE
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TECHNOLOGY IS AVAILABLE AND, GIVEN THE COST OF OIL BY THE TIME IT GETS TO OUAGADOUGOU, IT SEEMS TO ME THAT SOLAR ENERGY SHOULD BE MORE ECONOMICAL THAN OIL. IF FURTHER PILOT PROJECTS ARE NEEDED, WHY NOT LOCATE THEM IN THE SAHEL RATHER THAN IN ARIZONA? WHY NOT ALSO TRY OTHER SOURCES OF ENERGY SUCH AS THE WIND?

4. STILL IN RESPONSE TO PARA 4 OF REFTL, THERE WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE MANY PROBLEMS IN IMPLEMENTING THE TYPE OF AID STRATEGY WHICH SEEMS TO BE ENVISAGED IN THE DEVELOPMENT COORDINATION COMMITTEE STUDY. THERE ARE REAL LIMITS TO THE CAPACITY OF THESE POOR COUNTRIES TO ABSORB FOREIGN AID. ONE OF THE MAIN PROBLEMS WILL BE MANPOWER TRAINING AND THAT TAKES TIME. I ASSUME, HOWEVER, THAT WE ARE TALKING ABOUT A LONG-TERM PROGRAM OVER A PERIOD OF 25 OR 30 YEARS. LIKE BILL SULLIVAN, I HAVE SOME DIFFICULTY WITH THE PERCEIVED THREAT TO THE TRADITIONAL ELITES. IF BY "TRADITIONAL ELITES" IS MEANT THE TRADITIONAL CHIEFTAINS WHICH PLAYS A VERY IMPORTANT ROLE IN RURAL AREAS OF UPPER VOLTA (AND I SUSPECT IN OTHER COUNTRIES OF THE SAHEL, THEN IT IS INDEED A FACTOR TO BE TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION. THERE IS A STRONG TRADITIONAL AND RATHER DEMOCRATIC SOCIAL STRUCTURE AMONG THE SUBSISTENCE FARMERS OF UPPER VOLTA WHO MAKE UP SOME 95 PCT OF THE TOTAL POPULATION WITH AN ESTIMATED ANNUAL PER CAPITA INCOME OF 80 DOLLARS. THAT THIS SOCIAL STRUCTURE WILL EVENTUALLY COLLAPSE IF THE PROPOSED STRATEGY IS SUCCESSFUL IS NOT NECESSARILY OUR CONCERN. MEANWHILE, HOWEVER, AND FOR LACK OF ANYTHING ELSE TO REPLACE IT, IT IS IN OUR INTEREST TO PRESERVE THIS SOCIAL STRUCTURE AS LONG AS POSSIBLE. VOLTA FARMERS WILL LISTEN TO THEIR VILLAGE CHIEFS RATHER THAN TO THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CENTRAL

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GOVERNMENT. OUR EXPERIENCE SO FAR INDICATES THAT VILLAGE CHIEFS DO NOT NECESSARILY FEEL THREATENED BY EFFORTS TO IMPROVE THE LOT OF THE RURAL POOR AND THEY WILL COOPERATE IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT IF THEY CAN BE CONVINCED OF ITS VALUE. THEIR SUPPORT IS CERTAINLY ESSENTIAL FOR THE SUCCESS OF A PROJECT. AID'S RECENT PRACTICE OF INCLUDING AN ANTHROPOLOGIST OR SOCIOLOGIST IN PROJECT DESIGN TEAMS IS CERTAINLY A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION.

5. FINALLY, WITH REGARD TO PARA 5 OF REFTTEL, I SEE LITTLE INDICATION FROM THIS VANTAGE POINT THAT THE USSR OR OTHER COMMUNIST COUNTRIES OF EASTERN EUROPE CAN BE PERSUADED TO PARTICIPATE IN JOINT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS IN COLLABORATION WITH WESTERN COUNTRIES. THE USSR IS THE ONLY SUCH COUNTRY REPRESENTED IN UPPER VOLTA BUT, ASIDE FROM A SMALL PROGRAM OF CULTURAL EXCHANGES, IT HAS DONE NOTHING FOR THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF UPPER VOLTA, AND HAS CAREFULLY AVOIDED ANY INVOLVEMENT IN THE MULTIDONOR SAHEL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM AS WELL AS WHO'S PROGRAM FOR THE ERADICATION OF RIVER BLINDNESS. I SUSPECT THAT THE VOLTAN GOVERNMENT, WHICH IS HIGHLY SUSPICIOUS OF SOVIET MOTIVES, WOULD NOT BE INTERESTED IN HOSTING ANY SUCH VENTURES.

6. LIKE BILL SULLIVAN, I WOULD APPRECIATE BEING KEPT INFORMED OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE DEVELOPMENT COORDINATION COMMITTEE. GRAHAM

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